

Was Grandma Right?

Chicken Soup's Health Benefits

There is nothing more comforting than a steaming hot bowl of chicken soup on a winter day. We all know that chicken soup may soothe the soul. However, did you know that chicken soup might also soothe the common cold?

Comfort or Cure?

Chicken soup, as made famous by grandmothers world-wide, has often been prescribed by family and friends as a treatment for the common cold. Is there any truth to this myth? According to Dr. Rennard and his team at the University of Nebraska Medical Center, chicken soup may contain several ingredients that affect the body's immune system. It may also contain substances that have helpful medicinal activity.

According to these researchers, chicken soup has anti-inflammatory properties. This could explain why it soothes sore throats and eases the misery of colds and flu. They found that chicken soup and many of its ingredients helped stop the movement of white blood cells that are released in great numbers by viral infections like colds. This activity can cause extra mucous, which may be the cause of coughs and a stuffy nose resulting from upper respiratory infections such as colds.



Other researchers in the past have also suggested that the steam from the soup may play a role in soothing inflamed airways. While chicken soup isn't the cure for the common cold, scientists have confirmed what grandma has known for years, chicken soup can help relieve the annoying symptoms of a cold and just make you feel better.

The Proof is in the Pot

The ingredients that create a delicious pot of chicken soup have their own health benefits. Is this coincidence or the mastery of healing grandmothers everywhere?

Chicken - The amino acid, cysteine, which is found in chicken, is released when you cook the soup. It is similar to acetylcysteine, a bronchitis drug that helps thin the mucous in the lungs, making it easier to cough out.

Onions - The oils that give onions their pungent flavor are also strong antioxidants. Onions contain natural antihistamine and anti-inflammatory properties.

Garlic - Like onions, the substances in garlic can help boost the immune system and fight bacterial and viral infections.

Ginger - This spice may be a new addition to chicken soup for some, but the flavor and health benefits of ginger make it certainly worth adding. Ginger has anti-inflammatory agents that help soothe a sore throat and open up nasal passages; it also fights infection.

Carrots - A staple of chicken soup, carrots are a significant source of beta-carotene. Once converted to vitamin A, it enhances the action of white blood cells to help fight infections.



**"Soup puts the heart at ease,
calms down the violence of
hunger, eliminates the tension
of the day, and awakens and
refines the appetite."**

- Auguste Escoffier

Chicken Soup Recipes - From Our Pot to Yours

Ginger Chicken Noodle Soup (8 servings)

Chef Cary Neff

Conscious Cuisine®

1 tablespoon butter
1 Tablespoon minced garlic
1 tablespoon minced ginger
½ cup diced onion
½ cup diced celery
½ cup diced carrots
½ teaspoon ground black pepper
8 cups homemade or store bought chicken stock
1 Tablespoon chopped fresh parsley
4 cups chopped cooked chicken meat
8 ounces dried egg noodles



Melt the butter in medium stock pot over medium high heat. Add the garlic, ginger, onion, celery, carrots and black pepper and sauté to soften the onions about 2 minutes.

Add the stock and bring to a low boil. Stir in the parley and chicken meat and turn heat to a simmer, cook for 20 minutes. Add in the noodles and simmer for 10 minutes until noodles are al dente.

Chicken and Vegetable Stew (8-10 servings)

Chef Cary Neff

Conscious Cuisine®

3 cup cooked, diced chicken breast
1 teaspoon olive oil
1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic
¼ cup chopped onion
1 cup chopped celery
1 cup peeled and chopped carrot
2 medium potatoes, diced
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon dried thyme
2 quarts chicken stock
1 (15 oz) can cannellini beans, rinsed and drained

Heat a large stock pot over medium high heat and lightly coat the bottom of the pan with olive oil. Add the garlic, onion, celery and carrots and sauté for 2 minutes to soften the onion. Add the potatoes, bay leaf, thyme and chicken stock. Cook for about 15 minutes, until the potatoes are tender. Add beans and chicken and simmer another 5 minutes.

